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HONORING REPRESENTATIVE J.J.
PICKLE

HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 23, 2005

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a great man whose presence in this chamber raised the level of civility and decency and lifted the hearts of each and every one of us. Yesterday, with a number of my colleagues, I attended the funeral services of Representative J.J. "Jake" Pickle of Texas. This was a man whose gregarious spirit and good humor over 31 years was a welcomed addition to the proceedings of the chamber, and whose passion and determination to achieve a better life for all Americans were evident in his every day good will and efforts.

Jake was a natural politician because he loved to serve the people and realized that serving the people meant knowing them. He went out of his way to greet and meet individuals who were constituents, who were Americans, and who were simply human. In formal meetings or walks to this chamber or sitting around the office, Jake always had a welcoming and calming smile accompanied by a hearty greeting and oftentimes an affectionate bear hug. He was a lightening rod of energy and enthusiasm and infused that passion and concern into everyone he came in contact with.

That passion and dedication to the public carried over into his work in this chamber. I had the honor to work with Jake on the Ways and Means Committee and I know he was committed to helping the public in every way possible. He was not blinded by partisanship but believed in the right ideals and direction for this country. In the 1980s, as chair of the Social Security Subcommittee, he worked across party lines to achieve reforms in the system that would guarantee the program for future generations. He built alliances with members of different ideologies on issues of importance to him, Austin, Texas, and the American public.

His bonds and connection to public service were rooted in principle and a desire to do what was right. He often stated to me his worry in 1964 over the Civil Rights Act. He knew that legislation to secure rights that had been long denied to African Americans was overdue and right; yet he also knew of the strong opposition to civil rights legislation in his congressional district and Texas. He took the unprecedented and dangerous (for a Texan) step of supporting that legislation, which has moved the country so far in terms of race relations. He knew the importance of addressing the issue of race in America and ensuring that all Americans were treated equally in this country. While he received President Lyndon Johnson's personal appreciation for that action, he was concerned that he would not be returned to office. Fortunately, the people of Austin saw the greatness of this man and reelected him fifteen times.

There was clearly something superb about the Gentleman from Texas. He was willing to work for and do the work of the people. His

smiling face, his generous handshakes, and his willingness to put his neck on the line for the right cause were a welcomed part of his role in the House of Representatives. I miss working with Gentleman Jake as he would readily discuss and debate the issue of the day with anyone and with a hearty smile on his face.

There were several well-written obituaries earlier this week after Jake Pickle's death which captured much of the spirit and essence of this fine public servant. The one I found most meaningful is the one I submit for the RECORD today to share with my colleagues. It is an editorial from Jake's home town newspaper, the Austin American Statesman, paying him as high a compliment as any elected official can achieve, asserting that it was "A Privilege to be Served by Pickle."

A PRIVILEGE TO BE SERVED BY PICKLE

JUNE 19, 2005—Elected officeholders rightly talk about the privilege of serving the people. Occasionally, though, an officeholder comes along so complete in dedication, energy and humanity that the community is privileged to have his service. And having Jake Pickle for a congressman for 31 years proved just such a privilege for Central Texas.

Jake—anyone could call him Jake; that was fine by him—always enjoyed being the center of attention. He was a terrific storyteller, in part because he so obviously loved telling a story. Audiences, in turn, couldn't help but enjoy and start laughing at his stories, and soon he was laughing at himself and their reaction, too.

Another reason people liked him was that he so obviously relished being with people. He was a born politician, someone who really did get a charge out of meeting, being with and helping people. And he found in public office a perfect way to live out an honorable and useful life: Help others, and bask in the thanks.

But Pickle was far more than the glad-handing, back-slapping pal, as good as he was at that. He deeply believed that government could do things to help and protect ordinary people, and that's how he used his office in Congress. As he rose in seniority in Congress and the influential House Ways and Means Committee, he became chairman of its Social Security subcommittee, which in the early 1980s faced the same kind of fiscal problems it does today.

Here's an excerpt from the 1992 edition of the American Almanac of American Politics describing Pickle:

"While other Democrats went out and demagogued the Social Security issue on the campaign trail, Pickle pointed out its problems and worked hard as the architect of the Social Security rescue of 1983, when benefits were in effect cut by raising the normal retirement age over the years to 67 in the next century. He was a serious player on tax reform and on trade; he has come forward with well thought out amendments to help rural hospitals, to strengthen the Caribbean Basin Initiative and to tax foreign subsidiaries. Recently he has been looking closely, and to their discomfort, at government sponsored enterprises like Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, not because they seem to be in trouble now, but because he wants to avoid huge unanticipated obligations of the sort generated by federal deposit insurance of savings and loans."

If only he were in Congress today!

Pickle worked hard for Central Texas, not just in committee meetings and on the floor of the House of Representatives, but by coming home and asking us, repeatedly, what we

wanted him to do. He kept doing it so well that we kept sending him back, until he decided it was time for someone younger to fight the good fights.

It was a privilege to have him represent us, and we're sorry he won't be telling us any more good stories.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. MICHAEL T. MCCAUL

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 23, 2005

Mr. MCCAUL of FLorida. Mr. Speaker, yesterday, I attended the funeral of Congressman J.J. "Jake" Pickle—a former Member of the House who represented the 10th District of Texas for 31 years. As the current representative of the 10th District of Texas, it was my duty to pay homage to Congressman Pickle who gave so much to Texas and his constituents.

If I were able to vote on yesterday's considered measures, I would have voted in favor of an amendment that I offered to the Legislative Branch Appropriations Bill. This fiscally conservative, commonsense amendment would have addressed the excess printing and paper that is generated by the GPO, and directed those funds to a far more worthy recipient—the Capitol Police. I thank Congressman PATRICK MCHENRY for his support of my amendment, and for acting as my designee during the debate.

I also would have voted "yes" on a Constitutional Amendment banning the desecration of the American Flag—legislation of which I am an original cosponsor.

For the Legislative Branch Appropriations bill, I would have voted: "no" on the Baird amendment, "no" on the Davis amendment, "no" on the Hefley amendment, "no" on the motion to recommit, and "yes" on passage.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. RON LEWIS

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 23, 2005

Mr. LEWIS of Kentucky. Mr. Speaker, I was absent from the House on Monday, June 20, 2005 so that I could testify before the BRAC Commission regional hearing in St. Louis, MO, on behalf of Ft. Knox, an Army installation in my district designated for significant realignment. Had I been present, I would have voted the following way:

House amendment 328, claiming religious proselytizing at the Air Force Academy, "no."

House amendment 330, prohibiting funds for activities in Uzbekistan, "no."

House amendment 331, prohibiting military action against Syria, Iran, N. Korea without Congress authority, "no."

House amendment 333, prohibiting funds for carrying out sections of the Small Business Competitiveness Demonstration Program Act, "no."

H.R. 2863, on final passage of the Department of Defense Appropriations Act of 2006, "yea."